

FMCTC thanks member-owners and communities during annual picnics *Announces Internet speed increase without raising rates*

HARLAN — FMCTC kicked off the summer with four area customer appreciation picnics: June 2 in Manilla, June 3 in Westphalia, June 4 in Portsmouth and June 5 in Harlan serving over 1,200 current and future customers Pizza Ranch chicken and all the fixings.

"What a wonderful week getting out in the communities visiting with our friends & member-owners," stated CEO Tom Conry. "These annual picnics are a lot of work but always very rewarding. We hold four picnics each summer; 3 we move around between our 17 areas and one is centralized in Harlan (to be closer to the most people and limit travel)."

Conry said the work begins months in advance, determining the locations, working with local groups & locations to secure the sites and coordinating all that chicken with Pizza Ranch.

"Jackie Cote from Pizza Ranch is so great to work with. They are always on the ball helping us coordinate and organize these events, not to mention preparing the food and delivering to each location for 4 nights straight. They really do a wonderful job. We're also grateful to all the people in the communities who help us in securing the locations and get the word out about the picnics."

At this week's events, FMCTC made a big announcement: they increased Internet speeds to all customers, in most cases doubling speeds WITHOUT a rate increase. This change is automatic to current customers and went into effect June 1.

"Everyone is so dependent on the Internet. We understand how important a solid, reliable, fast fiber connection is," stated Conry. "We don't only want to provide high quality Internet, we want to be the area leader in speed & competitive pricing. But there is so much more than that. Cheaper isn't always better. We provide our customers with a state-of-the-art Calix GigaCenter WiFi router – at no extra cost – it's included as part of the service. Our staff is amazing and backs up the service 24 hours a day/7 days a week support. If your Internet is down, regardless of when, we want to know about it. We'll do everything we can to get it up and running, as fast as possible, because we know how important it is to you."

"Additionally, I'm not sure how much people really

understand that our company is owned by the people who use the service (member driven). We are a cooperative which means you are a valuable member of our company and you hold us accountable for everything we do. PLUS, at the Board's discretion, we send out patronage dividend checks every year. At our annual meeting last March, we announced \$1,712,472 in approved dividends for 2024. Since 1993, we've returned over \$21 million (\$21,083,616) to our members. That's money that goes directly into the pockets of our customers and then circulates throughout our communities. That's real value!"

"Lastly, we get a lot of questions about our Television service. Are we going to switch to a streaming service and make people switch, or will we stay with the same Basic & Digital TV offerings? For now, we are not changing (a thing on) our television service. We have something for everyone; whether they want a simple product that doesn't require set top boxes on each television to a more robust Digital TV service with a whole home DVR and set top box on each TV, or a combination of both. OR we have Internet up to nearly 1Gig for those who want to Stream, with experts to help customers learn. We really have it all."

This year, Lynn Schmitz was elected Chairman of the Board, tasked with leading the 10 member Board into the future. "We have strategic Board retreats every year where we layout our goals for the next 5, 10, 15 years and beyond," stated Schmitz. "We have an outstanding staff who truly understands the goals & plans and moves forward to achieve them. This year, we are continuing to upgrade equipment, plow more fiber in the ground, upgrade current customers and add new customers; member owners to the cooperative. I would bet that most people don't know that we are one of the largest (nearly 6,000 members) & oldest telecommunications cooperatives in the state and we have over 1148 miles of fiber in the ground. It takes a lot of time, training and dedicated people to keep things rolling along smoothly and efficiently."

"We really appreciate our customers/owners, staff and communities we serve. Giving out a little Pizza Ranch chicken and taking time to visit with them each year is

the least we can do. We're very grateful," ended Conry.

Since 1904 (over 121 years), FMCTC has been dedicated to providing the highest quality services at the best prices to their members/customers. As a full-service telecommunications provider, they offer an array of communications options including Internet, local telephone service, long distance, digital television and business phone system sales and service. Services are provided to nearly 6,000 customers in the rural & urban areas of Aspinwall, ru-



Attendees at FMCTC's customer appreciation picnic in Harlan June 5 enjoy Pizza Ranch Chicken and all the fixings. Picnics were also held in Manilla, Westphalia, and Portsmouth. (Photo contributed)

ral Avoca, Corley, Defiance, Dunlap, Earling, Hancock,

Harlan, Irwin, Jacksonville, Kirkman, Manilla, Panama,

Portsmouth, rural Shelby, Tenant and Westphalia in Southwest Iowa.

4-H Club Elk Horn Explorers



Members of the Elk Horn Explorers (left to right) Jager Klindt, Attalia Woudstra, Grayson Hogberg, Leah Boysen, and Ries Andersen gave presentations at the June 8 meeting. (Photos contributed)

Elk Horn Explorers met Sunday, June 8, 2025 at the Elk Horn school in the FCS room.

Lily Bircker called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Grayson Hogberg. There were 17 members, two leaders and nine guests in attendance. The secretary's report was given and there were no changes or corrections. The treasure's report was given; the ending balance is \$2,761.56. The Shelby County Youth Council report was given.

Old Business: Ries Andersen is going to be the Fair Queen representative for the Elk Horn Explorers. Member dues have to be paid this month. Fair clean-up will be July 1, from 5-7 p.m. Members are going to meet from 1-4pm on July 1st at the Elk Horn school for the fair booth work day.

New Business: Urban Air outing- Anyone planning on attending need to get waivers signed and given to Brenda. T-shirt order form has been

emailed out if anyone needs a club shirt. The Club has, one senior this year, Ries Andersen. The reporter, Lillian Niklasen, cut out and made copies of all of the reporter pieces and handed them out for all

of the members to put in their supporting materials tab for their record book. Jager Klindt led the 4-H Pledge. The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Presentations were given by Grayson Hogberg on base-

ball, Leah Boysen on how she made a wooden waving flag, Jager Klindt Raising a bucket/bottle calf, Ries Andersen on Grass Tetany, and Attalia Woudstra on All about sewing.

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